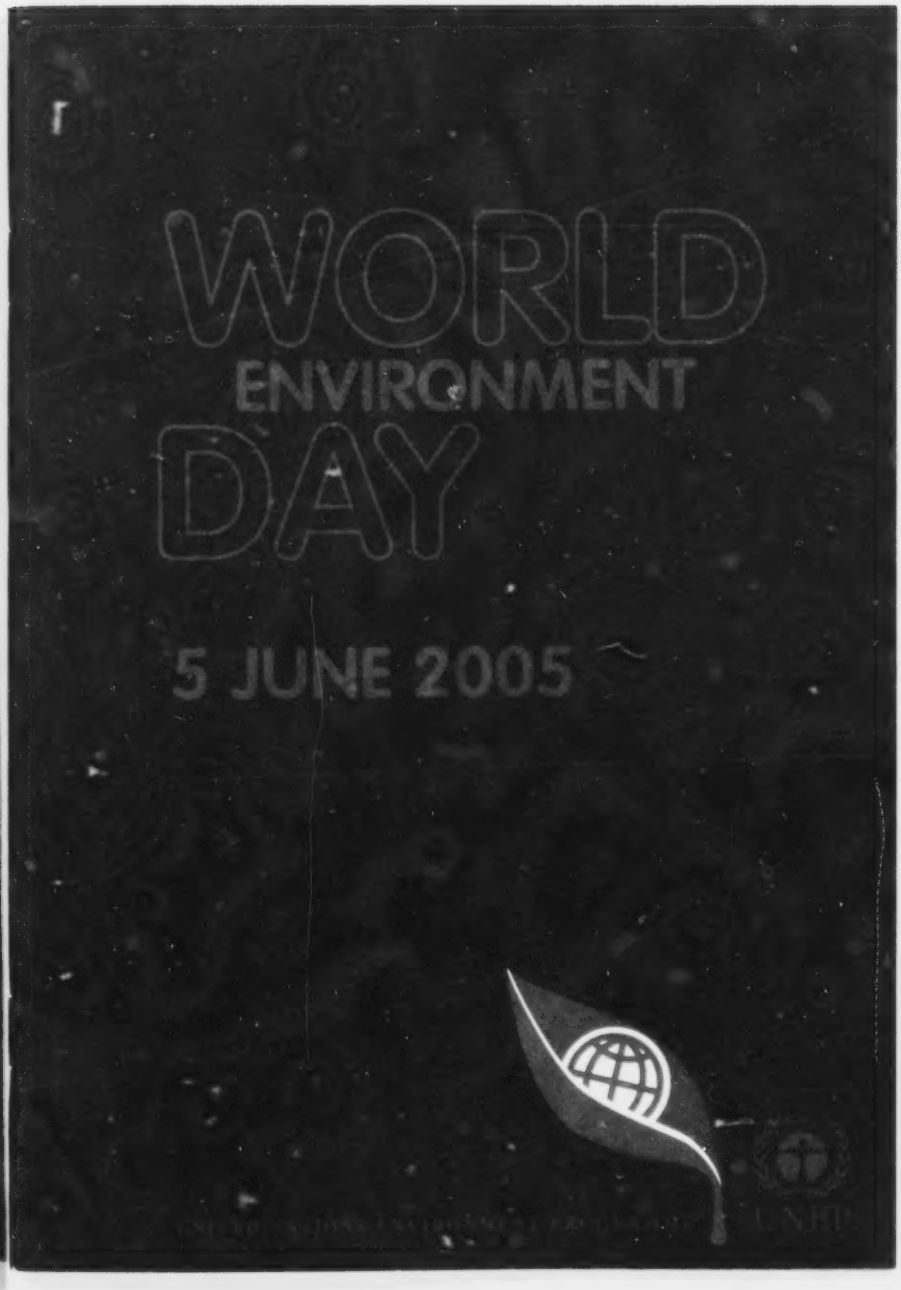
WORLD
ENVIRONMENT
DAY
5 JUNE 2005

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# WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

## 5 JUNE 2005

UNEP

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

GREEN
CITIES
PLAN FOR
THE PLANET!

# World Environment Day 5 June

World Environment Day is the United Nations flagship environmental event, celebrated every year on 5 June in more than 100 countries around the world. It was established in 1972 by the United Nations General Assembly and its commemoration is entrusted to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), whose international headquarters are located in Nairobi, Kenya.

The purpose of World Environment Day is to focus worldwide attention onto the importance of the environment and stimulate political attention and action. The event seeks to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership which will ensure that all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

Each year, a different city is chosen as the principal venue for the global celebration of World Environment Day. The host government and/or city, in cooperation with UNEP, set the tone for the event. A theme, slogan and logo are selected to be the focus for all World Environment Day information materials and promotional activities worldwide.

Interest in World Environment Day is growing each year, as evidenced by the number of countries which lend their support to this important United Nations Day, by the expanding list of municipalities, businesses and communities that participate, and by the hundreds of thousands of individuals who visit UNEP's World Environment Day web site.

Activities planned before and during World Environment Day are wide ranging. Essentially it is a "a people's event", with colourful activities such as street rallies, bicycle parades, green concerts, essay competitions in schools, tree planting, recycling and clean up campaigns.

World Environment Day is also meant to be an "intellectual" event, providing opportunities for seminars, workshops and symposiums on preserving the environmental health of our planet for the benefit of generations to come. The media play a critical role,

and the event inspires thousands of journalists around the world to report on the environment.

The Day enhances political attention and action. Local and regional officials, Heads of State and Government and, of course, Ministers of the Environment deliver statements and commit themselves to care for the Earth. For example, in 1994, President Fidel Ramos called upon filipinos to pause exactly at noon on 5 June and simultaneously "think clean, think green and with positive and joy-filled energy restore to nature the energy borrowed from it". More solemn pledges are made which lead to the establishment of permanent governmental structures dealing with environmental management and economic planning. World Environment Day also provides an opportunity to sign or ratify international conventions.

## World Environment Day host cities (since 1987)

| YEAR | CITY | COUNTRY |
|---|---|---|
| 2005 | San Francisco | United States |
| 2004 | Barcelona | Spain |
| 2003 | Beirut | Lebanon |
| 2002 | Shenzhen | China |
| 2001 | Torino/Havana | Italy/Cuba |
| 2000 | Adelaide | Australia |
| 1999 | Tokyo | Japan |
| 1998 | Moscow | Russian Federation |
| 1997 | Seoul | Republic of Kore |
| 1996 | Istanbul | Turkey |
| 1995 | Pretoria | South Africa |
| 1994 | London | United Kingdom |
| 1993 | Beijing | China |
| 1992 | Rio de Janeiro | Brazil |
| 1991 | Stockholm | Sweden |
| 1990 | Mexico City | Mexico |
| 1989 | Brussels | Belgium |
| 1988 | Bangkok | Thailand |
| 1987 | Nairobi | Kenya |

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Message of the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the occasion of World Environment Day, 5 June 2005

# The urban environmental challenge

The theme for this year's observance of World Environment Day, "Green Cities: Plan for the Planet!", highlights the challenges raised by one of the major trends of our times: the rapidly increasing proportion of people who are living in urban environments.

In the next quarter-century, almost all population growth will occur in cities, most of it in less developed countries. By 2030, more than 60 per cent of the world's population will live in urban areas. Such rapid urbanization presents profound challenges, from poverty and unemployment to crime and drug addiction. Already, one of every three urban dwellers lives in a slum. And in too many of the world's expanding towns and cities, environmental safeguards are few and planning is haphazard.

Indeed, the environmental consequences of urban growth are considerable. Cities are prolific users of natural resources and generators of waste. They produce most of the greenhouse gases that are causing global climate change. They often degrade local water quality, deplete aquifers, pollute the marine environment, foul the air and consume the land, thereby devastating biological diversity.

The rising concentration of humanity in cities and towns means the world will not achieve the Millennium Development Goals unless environmental planning is incorporated into all aspects of urban management. Creating environmentally friendly cities is an admittedly big challenge, but the technologies and expertise we need already exist. Clean transport, energy-efficient buildings, safe sanitation and economical water use are possible now, not just in the future, often in a manner that is affordable for all.

On this World Environment Day, I urge individuals, businesses, and local and national governments to take up the urban environmental challenge. Let us tap the great knowledge and natural dynamism of urban areas. And let us create "green cities" where people can raise their children and pursue their dreams in a well-planned, clean and healthy environment.

# Human dignity and social progress

Sixty years ago in San Francisco the founding members of the United Nations pledged their determination to save future generations from the scourge of war and promote human dignity and social progress. If, as a global community, we are to fulfil these pledges, we will have to address the issue of the world's rapid urbanization. Too many of today's cities are breeding grounds for pollution, poverty, disease and despair, but they need not be. With careful planning, our cities can be flagships of sustainable development. This is our message for World Environment Day 2005. *Green Cities: Plan for the Planet!* is both a warning and a declaration of faith in our ability to turn the expansion of urban centres to the benefit of all.

Wherever we look, cities are crying out for answers. In the developing world, where urban population growth is most pronounced, more than a billion people are condemned to lives of poverty and ill-health because they are denied the clean water, basic sanitation and adequate shelter that people in the developed world often take for granted. Easing the burden of the world's poorest people will reap a double dividend, giving them a foothold on the ladder to a better life and helping to protect the environment on which we all depend.

Providing improved sanitation to the slums of the world will protect freshwater resources—and the sea into which all rivers flow. It will also help to save the lives of many of the 6,000 children who die every day from preventable diseases associated with lack of safe water and poor hygiene. Replacing wood fires with more sustainable energy sources will not only preserve forests but reduce air pollution. Respiratory disease is another of the world's great killers, and the developing world's growing megacities have the worst air quality. Air pollution can also be tackled by cleaning up vehicle exhausts and preventing the release of toxic fumes from burning plastic and other refuse by promoting appropriate waste collection and disposal.

UNEP is working in all these areas. Our energy and sustainable transport programmes are addressing the environmental consequences of energy production and use, from local air pollution to global warming. We are working to promote environmentally sound technological solutions to freshwater use and waste disposal,

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and our Sustainable Cities programme—in partnership with UN-Habitat, our sister agency—is helping cities to plan and manage their environment and share the lessons with local and national governments worldwide.

The challenges presented by growing urbanization are daunting, but they are not insurmountable. For example, towns and cities—predominantly those in the developed world—are currently responsible for most of the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change, mostly from cars, trucks and power stations. These emissions can be drastically cut by a combination of clean energy technologies coupled with enlightened city planning.

Imagine a city where buildings use solar power to help generate their own energy, and waste less because they use power-saving lighting and are well-insulated, where public transport is affordable and efficient, where vehicles pollute less because they are powered by electricity or hydrogen. That city has become part of the solution, not the problem. It is the city of the future. With the support of communities, businesses and, above all, governments, it can also be the city of today.

The world is not short of inspiring answers to the questions raised by the urban millennium. Across the globe, and not just in the developed world, there are examples of communities, businesses and governments working to redesign the metropolis. Traffic-clogged city centres are being reclaimed for pedestrians, green spaces preserved and expanded, recycling schemes promoted, environmentally friendly buildings designed. These examples are like seeds. The challenge is to nurture these seeds, propagate them, and spread them to the furthest reaches of the globe.

Towns and cities are humanity's home—and its future. Making that a future of peace, dignity and prosperity is the responsibility of all. It is appropriate, then, that World Environment Day 2005 is being celebrated in the birthplace of the organization founded to represent the interests of everyone, from the most powerful to the most humble. We, the peoples of the United Nations, need to look forward with hope. That hope lies in Green Cities.

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# Build a healthy respect for our planet

United Nations World Environment Day is one of the most important events on the international environmental calender. California and San Francisco are honored to be the first hosts in the United States for World Environment Day.

The environment is an essential part of the California experience. The state's stunning beauty lies in its diverse natural wonders and resources. I am passionately committed to defending California's environment, and providing real leadership to protect our precious land, air, and water.

Here in California, we have rejected the notion that we must choose between protecting the environment, and protecting jobs and economic growth. *We know that* if our beaches are soiled by oil spills, tourists will not experience the wonders of our magnificent coastline. If we log our forests irresponsibly, streambeds will be destroyed and our fishing industry will suffer.

But, California is not alone in facing this challenge. If we are going to leave a better planet for generations to come, we must work within a global effort to ensure the economy and the environment never become competing interests.

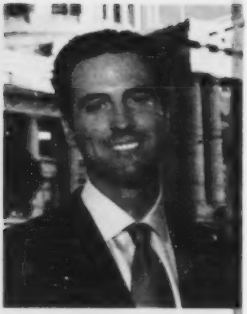
United Nations World Environment Day will help us focus on these critical issues, but there is an added significance to the event coming to San Francisco.

Sixty years ago, the United Nations was born in the City by the Bay. Representatives from fifty-one countries committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security founded the United Nations at the 1945 charter convention in San Francisco.

Today, nearly every nation in the world belongs to the United Nations. Together, members work to maintain international peace, develop friendly relations, cooperate in solving international problems, and promote respect for human rights.

As the nations of the world meet this week in San Francisco, we can add another great principle to the list: working together to build a sustainable future and a healthy respect for our planet.

# Sustain our planet and our people



San Francisco is honored to host United Nations World Environment Day 2005. We are delighted to work with the United Nations Environment Programme to make sure that World Environment Day in San Francisco leaves a legacy that will advance environmental wellbeing here at home and around the world.

The theme for World Environment Day 2005 is 'Green Cities'. This is particularly fitting since the 21st century is the first time that most of the world's population will live in cities. As urban populations grow, it becomes more and more vital to balance the needs of the environment, the economy, and social equity if we are going to develop a way of living that can sustain our planet and our people into future generations.

The population shift from rural areas to the cities will have a dramaticimpact on the planet's resources. It will also result in significant political changes where city governments will become directly responsible for solving critical environmental issues.

Every city in the world depends on rural territories many times its size to provide food and water for its citizens, to say nothing of the resources required to produce consumer goods. But to date little attention has been paid to developing the tools cities will need to solve these environmental challenges.

World Environment Day 2005 will feature a series of special events focusing on urban environmental issues such as recycling, renewable energy, resource conservation, environmental justice and public health. Mayors from the world's largest cities will share ideas and experiences, establish goals for urban environmental improvement, and identify the means to attain these goals. This will all be compiled into a document called the San Francisco Urban Environmental Accords, a first-ever set of environmental agreements made between municipal governments.

These accords will help all of us to act locally, while thinking globally.

Issues for the
urban millennium

- In 1950 less than one person in three lived in a town or city. Today nearly half the world's population is urban. By 2030 the proportion will be more than 60 per cent.

- Virtually all population growth in the next quarter-century will be in urban areas in the less developed countries. The fastest growth will not be in the bigger cities but in urban centres with fewer than 500,000 people.

- In 2000 there were 402 cities with between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and 22 cities with between 5 and 10 million. In 1950 New York was the only city with more than 10 million people. By 2015, there will be 23 such cities, 19 of them in developing countries.

- In the more developed countries, 75 per cent of the population is urban. The proportion of urban dwellers in the Asian region is less than 40 per cent, but its urban population is 1.5 billion—more than Europe, Latin America, Oceania and North America combined. Africa is the least urbanized continent, but its urban population is the fastest growing.

- Urbanization in the developed world has largely coincided with economic growth and increases in welfare. This is not the case with developing countries. For example, in Africa, more than 70 per cent of the urban population—over 160 million people—lives in slums. Since 1990, Africa's urban slum population has grown by almost 5 per cent a year and is on course to double every 15 years.

- At least 1 billion people, mainly in Asia, Africa and Latin America live in improvised slums and informal squatter settlements, which are neither legally recognized nor serviced by city authorities. By 2020 the figure could be more than 2 billion people.

- One of the targets of Millennium Development Goal 7 (to ensure environmental sustainability) is to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020. Environmental factors are a major cause of death, disease and lost productivity, all of which conspire to perpetuate poverty.

- Unsafe water and inadequate sanitation are typical hazards of living in slums. Diarrhoea is the second most common cause of child mortality, estimated to be responsible for 12 per cent of deaths of children under five in developing countries—1.3 million deaths every year.

- Slum dwellers generally also have to contend with poor air quality. Approximately 2 million children under five die each year from acute respiratory infections. The largest global killer of young children, these infections are aggravated by environmental factors such as indoor and outdoor air pollution.

- According to the World Health Organization, 1.5 billion urban residents endure levels of outdoor air pollution that exceed maximum recommended levels. As many as half a million deaths can be

attributed to particulate and sulphur dioxide air pollution alone, mostly from vehicle exhaust emissions. One study estimates that up to one in five lung cancer cases in the United States are due to vehicle emissions.

- Burning refuse, especially plastics and other hazardous waste, also affects air quality. The global health costs of air pollution are estimated at US $1 billion. In developed countries air pollution costs are close to 2 per cent of GDP; in developing countries the figure is between 5 and 20 per cent.

- Power generation, industry and transport—currently mainly associated with towns and cities in the developed world—are responsible for the majority of emissions of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas that is causing climate change.

- Over the next quarter-century, it is estimated that carbon dioxide emissions, mostly from cars, trucks and power stations, will rise by 60 per cent. More than two-thirds of the increase will come from developing countries as a consequence of fast economic growth and a significant increase in car ownership.

- Climate change is a threat to low-lying and coastal towns and cities due to sea level rise, and more frequent and severe storms. Growing urban populations—especially those in slums—are more vulnerable to natural disasters. Approximately 40 per cent of the world's population lives within 60 kilometres of the coast.

- Urbanization and economic development habitually goes hand-in-hand with increased per capita resource consumption and waste generation. Urban dwellers in the developed world generate up to six times as much waste as in developing countries.

- Municipalities can spend as much as 30 per cent of their budget on waste disposal, mostly on transportation. The costs are often exacerbated by diminishing availability of suitable land as urban areas spread and land prices rise.

- In developing countries, the cost of solid waste management can be even higher, up to 50 percent of recurrent budgets. The infrastructure for safe disposal of waste is also often lacking. Between 30 and 60 per cent of urban solid waste is uncollected and less than 50 per cent of the population is served.

- As towns and cities develop so does their reliance on resources from further afield, as well as their environmental impact—what is known as their ecological footprint.

- The ecological footprint of London, UK, is 120 times the city's area. An average North American city with a population of 650,000 requires 30,000 square kilometres of land to service its needs. In contrast, a similar sized city but less affluent city in India requires 2,800 square kilometres.

- Since 1950 global fossil fuel use has increased by 500 per cent. Freshwater consumption has nearly doubled since 1960, and the marine

catch has quadrupled. A city of 10 million people—for example Manila, Cairo or Rio de Janeiro—imports at least 6,000 tonnes of food every day.

- More than half of freshwater tapped for human use goes to urban areas: for industry, for drinking and sanitation purposes, or via irrigation for crops. Up to 65 per cent of water used for irrigation is wasted.

- In many developing country cities between 40 and 60 per cent of costly drinkable water is lost because of leaks in pipes and illegal connections. Even in industrialized countries, as much as a quarter of piped water is wasted.

- Urban air temperatures can be as much as 5 C hotter than the surrounding countryside when natural land cover is replaced by roads and buildings. This phenomenon, known as the 'heat island effect', can be mitigated by preserving or creating green spaces in cities.

- Green areas in urban settlements serve many other purposes. Urban forests produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide, thus enhancing air quality. They provide storm water control and provide a home for urban wildlife.

- Managed well, urban settlements can support growing concentrations of people, limiting their impact on the environment and improving their health and living standards. National and local laws and subsidies can discourage waste, encourage conservation and promote sustainable solutions.

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- Examples of good management include the use of so-called grey water to flush toilets; low-polluting vehicles and efficient public transport systems that solve gridlock problems and clean up the atmosphere; low-energy lighting that saves energy; and waste recycling schemes.

- There are many examples from around the globe of local governments, citizens' organizations, business and industry devising and implementing innovative answers to the issues of the urban millennium and creating Green Cities. Links to their activities, and more information about urbanization and the environment is available from the UNEP World Environment Day Website http://www.unep.org/wed/2005/english/.

# The World Environment Day alphabet
# 60 ways to celebrate

**A**
Award presentations (for environment-related activities)
Art using recycled materials
Auctions to benefit an environmental project
Awareness campaign

**B**
Bicycle parades/races
Broadcast of public service announcements (TV and radio)

**C**
Carpools
Celebrity support
Clean-up campaigns
Competitions (banner, drawing, essay, painting, poster, poetry)
Conferences on the environment

**D**
Discussions (small and large groups)
Distribution of leaflets, brochures and posters

**E**
Environmental education programmes in schools
Establishment of governmental structures dealing with environmental management
Excursions to nature sites
Exhibitions (drawings, posters, photos and paintings)

**F**
Fairs
Film festivals on the environment/screening of environmental films

**G**
Green concerts
Guidelines on how the community can undertake environmental protection activities

**H**
Hoist banners at major intersections in cities

**I**
Involve various partners (NGOs, ministries of environment, youth groups, celebrities, business, industry, private sector)

**J**
Join an environmental group

**K**
Keep your neighbourhood clean
Kick start an environmental campaign
Know your rights

**L**
Launch of government environment policies, books and reports

**M**
Media coverage and activities (TV and radio programmes and interviews, newspaper articles, editorials, letters to the editor on the environment)

**N**
Network
Never litter

**O**
Organize a special event

**P**
Parades
Performances (plays, songs, poetry)
Promotional materials related to theme (T-shirts, stickers, bookmarks)
Puppet shows for children featuring environmental messages

**Q**
Quizzes related to the theme for schools, youth groups, company staff, etc...

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**R**
Rallies
Ratify international environmental conventions
Recycle
Rehabilitate natural habitats
Repair
Reuse

**S**
Save paper
Seminars
Sign international environmental conventions
Sort rubbish
Sponsorship from private sector
Symposia

**T**
Tree planting

**U**
Use sustainable modes of transportation (walking, jogging, cycling, skating, carpool)

**V**
Voice your concerns
Volunteer for organizations such as Clean Up the World
Vote for the environment

**W**
Workshops
Write plays, poems, songs
Write letters to your civic leaders, members of parliament, national government and newspapers

**X**
X-press your concern for the environment

**Y**
Youth-led activities

**Z**
Zero emissions

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